

2017 Annual Report



# Reducing Poverty

Through Effective Legal Assistance

*The mission of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati is to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, to promote economic and family stability, and to reduce poverty through effective legal assistance.*

## *Dear Friends:*

Legal Aid helps people living in poverty achieve economic and family stability. We offer assistance to resolve serious obstacles to children's health and families' well-being such as unsafe housing, lack of income, or domestic violence.

Safe and affordable housing is fundamental for family stability. One way Legal Aid helps families is by preserving affordable housing. In 2017, Legal Aid won a major victory for tenants in the Alms Hill Apartments by preventing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from ending the Alms' Section 8 housing assistance contract.

Housing insecurity is a significant obstacle for many of our clients. In fact, it is the most frequent client problem our medical-legal partnership attorneys encounter. Child HeLP, our award-winning partnership with Cincinnati Children's, is now in its tenth year. Through Child HeLP, Legal Aid continues to improve health outcomes and stabilize children and families who live in unsafe housing, face eviction, or lack income. M-HeLP, our maternal health-law partnership with TriHealth, supported by a grant from bi3, is achieving similar results for pregnant women. Preliminary results indicate that M-HeLP clients have fewer pre-term births. This result, alone, can lead to life-long, improved health outcomes.

Legal Aid also addresses issues affecting family stability through our Family Law Clinic and our new Juvenile Custody and Companionship Clinic. In partnership with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court and the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Aid has expanded services to stabilize custody for children whose parents are unable to provide care.

This annual report highlights these effective programs, and recognizes Legal Aid teams and individual attorneys for their achievements over the past year.

As always, we extend our deepest thanks to our donors, funders, volunteer attorneys, and partner organizations for your support of our mission.



*Mary*

Mary Asbury  
*Executive Director*



*Vince*

Vincent B. Stamp  
*President*

## Removing Roadblocks for Young Families

Legal Aid supports family stability by helping clear barriers to employment such as eviction, domestic abuse, and criminal records. We recently expanded our efforts to improve opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency by participating in a statewide initiative: Comprehensive Case Management in Employment Program (CCMEP).

CCMEP provides intensive, managed support to young families (ages 16-24) who are receiving cash assistance, to better equip them to be employed and become self-sufficient. Case managers refer these young parents to Legal Aid for help with barriers that disrupt, delay or impede success in employment.

Legal Aid attorneys, working with Ohio Department of Job & Family Services staff and the Governor’s taskforce, helped design and establish CCMEP. JFS contracted with Talbert House to lead a case management team that includes Easter Seals, the Urban League, and the Cincinnati/Hamilton County Community Action Agency as well as Legal Aid to implement the program in Hamilton County.

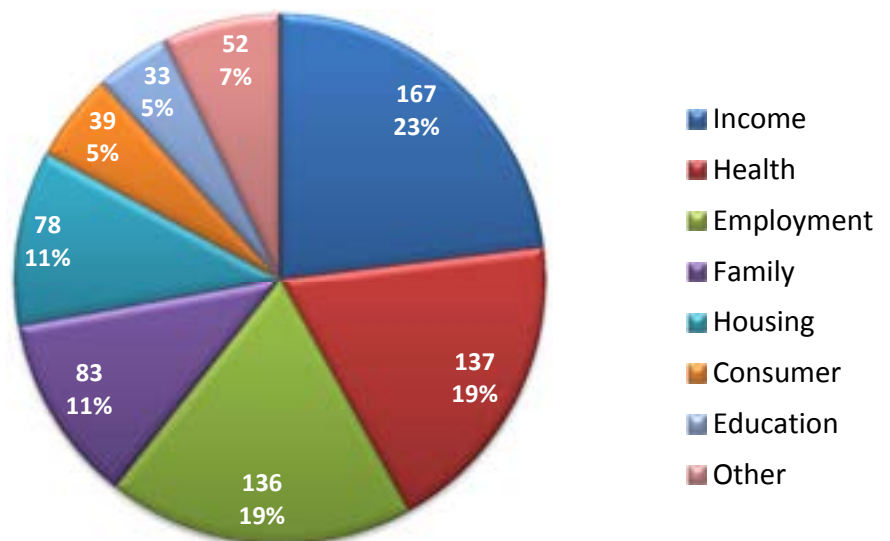


In the first 16 months, Legal Aid received 85 CCMEP referrals. One Talbert House referral illustrates how Legal Aid resolved a barrier to seeking employment. “Ms. Ray” was referred by her CCMEP case manager because she was in danger of being evicted from her public housing apartment for non-payment of rent. Even though she had paid her past due rent, the eviction had not been dismissed. An eviction on her record would have prevented her from renting another apartment.

Ms. Ray was also facing harassment and threatening behavior from neighbors. She needed help transferring to a new apartment. Legal Aid ensured that the eviction was dismissed, and worked with CMHA to get transfer options for Ms. Ray. She was able to move to a new apartment, where she feels safe. As a result, she is now able to focus on her employment search.

We look forward to working with our CCMEP partners to help more families overcome obstacles to employment. Overall, Legal Aid was able to resolve a variety of barriers to employment for 725 individuals in 2017. The chart shows the types of barriers our clients faced.

**Barriers Resolved By Legal Aid**



# Preserving Affordable Housing

Unsafe housing conditions and the threat of eviction can cascade into problems that create turmoil for families. Legal Aid leads community efforts to prevent homelessness by preserving safe, affordable housing for low-income families and by improving rental housing conditions.

Legal Aid's success in Federal Court prevented the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from ending the Section 8 housing assistance contract for 150 families in the Alms Hill Apartments. Our attorneys began assisting the Alms residents in 2015 when the bank filed for foreclosure in state court. Legal Aid joined forces with the City of Cincinnati to get a receiver appointed to make needed improvements to the building and to find a preservation buyer. HUD proposed giving the Alms residents Section 8 vouchers to use elsewhere. But, the Alms residents did not want to be forced out of their Walnut Hills neighborhood and given the documented 40,000 unit gap in available, affordable housing in Hamilton County, the likelihood of the residents finding new housing was extremely low. Legal Aid is working with the residents, the City of Cincinnati and HUD to find a suitable buyer who will maintain this important affordable housing asset.



Attorney Nick DiNardo speaks with the resident association at Parkway Towers



Legal Aid Attorneys meet with the resident association at Advent Apartments.

Legal Aid represented several other resident associations during 2017 to ensure that their apartments remained as safe, affordable housing options.

For example, our attorneys helped dozens of elderly and disabled residents of the Advent Apartments in Walnut Hills obtain repairs by advocating successfully in court for the appointment of a receiver. The receiver collected rent and made the repairs necessary to keep the building livable.

Legal Aid attorneys partnered with Santa Maria Community Services to assist residents at the Eagle Watch Apartments in West Price Hill form a residents association in response to several serious issues threatening their housing. The main driveway to the complex had collapsed, making access unsafe. Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) threatened to withdraw vouchers for the property which would have forced 59 families to move. As a result of Legal Aid's negotiations on behalf of the residents, the driveway was fully repaired, conditions in the complex were improved, and CMHA agreed to keep the vouchers in place.

At Parkway Towers in Over-The-Rhine, Legal Aid and the Homeless Coalition prevented the proposed relocation of 70 low-income resident families. We helped the tenants and the Homeless Coalition form a residents association, and continue to negotiate with the building's owner, on the residents' behalf, to preserve the building's affordable housing units. At Regal Manor in the West End, our attorneys are working with the Homeless Coalition to help the senior tenants organize a residents association to address the multiple security concerns in the building.

## Expanding Services to Address Custody Issues

Responding to the needs of an increasing number of low-income individuals filing on their own for changes of custody or visitation, Legal Aid partnered with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court, the Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Hamilton County Law Library to introduce the Juvenile Custody, and Companionship Clinic in October 2017.

The Clinic assists family members or guardians seeking to stabilize custody for children so that school and health care decisions can be made when parents are not able to provide care.

Volunteer Lawyers offer brief legal advice, including explanations of court procedures, guidance on evidence required for court, and assistance to draft agreements and pleadings. Juvenile Court staff are also available to help with forms.

In the clinic's first six months, eleven volunteer attorneys assisted 286 individuals, spending on average 40 minutes with each.

The Custody and Companionship Clinic is open Monday from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. and Wednesday from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. on the first floor of 800 Broadway in downtown Cincinnati.



Volunteer Attorney Nancy Brewer meets with a client at the Juvenile Custody and Companionship Clinic

## VLP Recognizes Attorneys for Outstanding *Pro Bono* Service



The Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation is pleased to announce its 2017 Volunteer Lawyer of the Year: **B. SCOTT BOSTER**, a partner at Ulmer & Berne LLP. Scott has taken *pro bono* VLP cases for over 30 years.

Scott has assisted 7 clients referred through the VLP for Legal Aid's Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) in the first 16 months of its operation. Scott's willingness to assist with the LITC has helped it be effective and successful. In one matter, he successfully negotiated a 50% reduction in delinquent taxes for a 79-year-old man suffering from memory loss and heart disease, whose only income is a small pension.

Scott also has handled a variety of consumer matters and has accepted at least two VLP referrals each year for the past 15 years. His

dedication to helping clients and his long-term commitment to the VLP's mission are inspiring. Congratulations, Scott!



**CATHERINE EVANS** was honored as the Butler County Volunteer Lawyer of the Year. Anne Lucas, managing attorney of the VLP presented the award to Cathi at the 2017 Butler County Bar Association Law Day celebration.

Cathi, a partner at Millikin & Fitton, has a long history as a VLP attorney, representing three *pro bono* clients every year on average for nearly 20 years. In addition to helping VLP clients, Cathi's been a VLPPF board member since 2003, and served as President in 2014-2016. Thanks, Cathi, for your sustained commitment to serving clients and to providing leadership to the VLP!

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+ Fund of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation. +++ Fund of the Dayton Foundation.

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Drs. Christopher C. Rowe &  
Helen Asbury

*In Honor of Chris Bucher*  
Frank & Kirsten Szendrey

*In Honor of Daniel J. Buckley*  
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*In Honor of Bonnie G. Camden*  
Janet E. Pecquet

*In Honor of Elaine Fink*  
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*In Memory of Judge S. Arthur Spiegel*  
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*In Memory of George & Rita Watkins*  
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D. David Altman

*In Memory of Sharon Barker*  
David B. Walker

*In Memory of Judge Gilbert Bettman*  
Marianna Brown Bettman

## Legal Aid's Commitment to Preserving Affordable Housing Recognized with Award from the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition

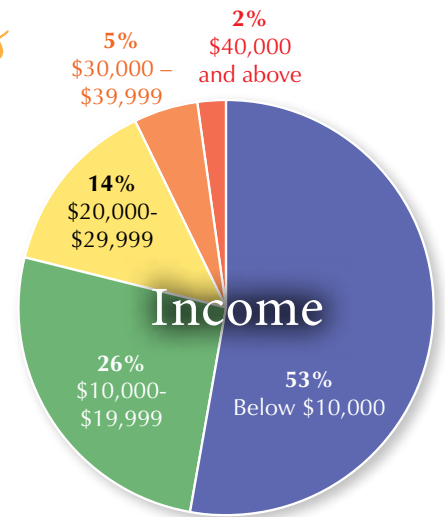
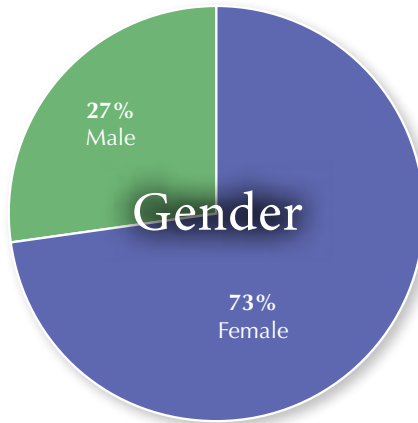
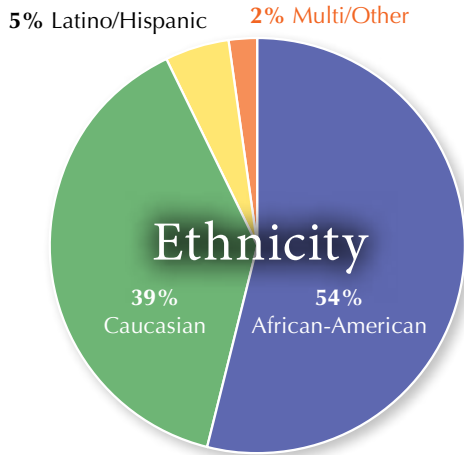


Josh Spring, Executive Director of the Homeless Coalition with Legal Aid Attorney, Stephanie Moes at the Coalition's Awards Dinner.

The Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition honored Legal Aid's Housing Team with the Julie Martin Service Provider of the Year award. Our thanks to Kimetta Carter and the Alms Hill Residents' Council for nominating Legal Aid for this award. Thanks also to the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition Board and Executive Director, Josh Spring, for this honor, and for all their excellent work to help residents keep affordable housing.



# Our Clients



## Individual Case Services January – December 2017

COUNTY	Requests for Service	Sent Written Materials	Made External Referral	LAS Case Open	VLP Case Open	Pending LAS & VLP
BROWN	393	55	98	74	19	133
BUTLER	3,155	168	924	869	165	1,425
CLERMONT	1,079	85	318	204	87	231
CLINTON	359	88	102	53	17	37
HAMILTON	15,352	874	2,919	3,208	1,384	2,822
HIGHLAND	315	103	82	41	9	30
WARREN	671	45	233	135	43	148
UNSPECIFIED	5,394	48	2,469	152	30	82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,718</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>7,145</b>	<b>4,736</b>	<b>1,754</b>	<b>4,908</b>

*Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati/Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC/Volunteer Lawyers Project*

## Legal Aid Named Champion of Fair Housing

Legal Aid’s Housing Team received a Champion of Fair Housing award at Housing Opportunities Made Equal’s (HOME) 50th anniversary celebration on April 19. HOME selected five champions; one for each of HOME’s five decades of existence. Each champion played a significant role in advancing fair housing.

Robert F. Laufman, a 40 year Legal Aid Society Board member and leading fair housing attorney, was also honored as a Fair Housing Champion.



Legal Aid Society Executive Director, Mary Asbury with members of the Housing Team and HOME’s Executive Director, Jeniece Jones at the 50th Anniversary Gala.

# Program Funders

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\* Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati.

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### 2017 Operating Revenue

Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.....	\$2,215,016
Legal Services Corporation* .....	1,626,720
Government Grants & Contracts.....	3,247,249
United Way.....	428,180
Contributions.....	230,571
Foundation Grants.....	877,925
Rental Income.....	244,131
Other.....	88,735
<b>Total Operating Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$8,958,527</b>

### 2017 Functional Expense

Housing & Consumer Program.....	\$1,753,239
Employment & Benefits Program.....	1,108,967
Family & Domestic Violence Program .....	1,831,515
Children & Education Program.....	1,828,253
General Civil & VLP.....	507,301
Management & General .....	907,412
Fundraising.....	120,264
Rental Property.....	269,708
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$8,326,659</b>

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	1,040,425	602,056
Cash held in trust for clients	989,459	8,132
Investments	3,442,104	2,982,752
Grants and Contracts receivable	610,540	612,139
Contributions receivable, net	1,277,454	1,761,897
Property and equipment, net	3,317,930	3,401,678
Other	34,190	116,857
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>10,712,102</b>	<b>9,485,511</b>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	275,630	139,533
Accrued annual leave	302,998	291,944
Assets held for others	989,458	8,132
Long-term debt	1,329,856	1,431,317
Other accrued liabilities	148,535	202,929
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,046,477</b>	<b>2,073,855</b>

### Net Assets

Unrestricted		
Operating	4,016,431	3,515,202
Board designated	1,316,362	1,155,625
Temporarily restricted	1,665,174	2,073,168
Permanently restricted	667,658	667,658
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>7,665,625</b>	<b>7,411,656</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>10,712,102</b>	<b>9,485,511</b>

The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati and its affiliate the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC provide civil legal services in seven southwest Ohio counties: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, Brown, Warren, Clinton, and Highland. Legal Services Corporation supports only the activities of the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati. The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati provides staff support for the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP). This Annual Report provides information about both Legal Aid Societies and the VLP.

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